

This newsletter conveys the voices of foreign residents, while also focusing on the activities of various international organizations and on the restoration efforts after the disaster.



In May 2011, Fukushima NOW started under the name of "Ganbaro (Let's do the best) Fukushima". We are publishing a 3-part special edition series on Fukushima Prefecture's progress in revitalization and reconstruction. The last issue in this series is about "Anpo-gaki" partially dried Japanese persimmons.



## Reviving the amber fruits in the plains of silvery white

The Great East Japan Earthquake and Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident severely affected the farmlands and the agricultural output. The output of agricultural, forestry and fishery products of Fukushima Prefecture was exposed to both distribution restraints and harmful rumors. Ever since, the prefecture has been making efforts on the safety measures of agricultural, forestry and fishery products including processed goods, such as monitoring radiation level and publicizing the results. One of the processed products affected by the disaster is "Anpo-gaki". Born in the Yanagawa area, Date City more than 90 years ago, "Anpo-gaki" is a type of processed persimmons which is partially dried through the sulfur



Photo : Amber colored Anpo-gaki

fumigation process. For two years, from 2011 to 2012, the farmers of the Date area were forced to face the threat of the industry becoming extinct due to the low motivation derived from the production restraint demand from the prefectural government. Hence, in order to restore the safe and secure production and to protect the industry, the farmers and the agricultural cooperative union combined their forces on the activities such as decontamination of the trees and total inspections. Overcoming all these difficulties, in 2013, "Anpo-gaki" production was revived in the areas accepted as the Process-Restart-Model-Area and is continuing the production in the same area ever since.



Fukushima Mirai Agricultural Cooperative Association  
Union President Seiichi Kazumata

Born in Yanagawa Town, Date City. Working mainly as the adviser of fruit tree farming since 1974. Served as the coordinator between farmers and the government during the Great East Japan Earthquake. Currently working as a JA union president of 12 municipalities in northern Fukushima and Soma areas.

### Q Can you tell us more about the history of "Anpo-gaki"?

"Anpo-gaki" was originally born in former Isazawa area, Yanagawa Town in 1922, then the production spread all over Japan. At that time, sericulture was flourishing in Date area. People earned enough income by breeding the silkworms in the fall and growing persimmons in the winter, so that the farmers didn't have to go on expatriate labors. As the result, Date area became the home of "Anpo-gaki".

### Q After the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident, what kind of countermeasures were taken?

We talked over and over with the farmers about the decontamination methods and how to restart the production of "Anpo-gaki". There were times that the talk concluded hopelessly. We delivered our desire to revive the farmlands relentlessly. As for the decontamination activity, farmers, agricultural cooperative union, private producers were all on a same page and worked as a team. As the result, we cleaned 550,000 trees (250,000 were persimmon trees) in 2 towns and 1 city in Date area.

### Q Please comment on the current situation of "Anpo-gaki".

In 2016, we established the "Anpo-gaki Factory - Future" in order to reduce the pressure of the elderly farmers. Although we have problems to solve regarding the preservation methods overseas, we are aiming to start exporting our products to Dubai. "Anpo-gaki" is steadily walking its path of revival.

### Thoughts on the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Nuclear Disaster Mr. Quanyi Xu

(From Shanghai, China. Currently living in Mishima Town)

Currently working as a Local Vitalization Cooperator, Mr. Quanyi Xu was familiar about Japan at a young age due to the influence from his aunt who studied in Japan with the Japanese government scholarship after the establishment of diplomatic relation. Mr. Xu experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake in Japan, when he was working for the Fukushima Prefecture Shanghai Office in China as the personnel in charge of import products from Fukushima Prefecture. We managed to interview Mr. Xu who worked hard on communicating accurate information at Fukushima Prefecture International Affairs Division for 5 years as a Coordinator for International Relations in the JET Programme. (ZOOM Interview date: 16 December 2020)



#### - Mr. Xu, could you please tell us about how you experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake?

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, I was in Shizuoka Prefecture, travelling. On the previous day, I had arrived in Fukushima Prefecture and I had a plan to stay in Japan for a week. I couldn't get to the airport due to the planned power outage in Tokyo, and I couldn't catch the flight that I was supposed to be on. That was my first planned blackout experience. To tell the truth, even though I have lived in Japan for 7 years, I still couldn't grasp the meaning of 'Untenmiawase (Operation Suspended)' accurately.

#### - After the Great East Japan Earthquake, what led you to start working in Fukushima?

After the disaster, I had more tasks at work to explain the current situation of Fukushima based on the materials. I have become to think that I want to help after visiting disaster affected areas and listening to the victims of the disasters on my private occasions. After moving here, there were times that I invited my friends from Japan and overseas to Fukushima in order to let them know about the situation of revitalization. Also, I was happy to meet other foreigners living in Fukushima Prefecture who share the same passion to fight against the harmful rumors by communicating the right information.

#### - How do you think about the revitalization of Fukushima from now on?

Unfortunately, there are still harmful rumors about Fukushima in other countries. I think it is important to keep posting the situation of revitalization on social media. Also, the fact that I am living in Fukushima would contribute to the message that it is safe here. After living in Mishima Town where there is a lot of snow for 3 years, I have learned that 'Cleverness' is important in order to get along with the nature. Creating a good relationship leads to a happier life. I would love to keep this bond between Fukushima for a long time in the future.

## Scenes of Fukushima

### COVID-19 Consultation Hotline

For the foreign residents, Fukushima Prefecture has established the Hotline where you can consult over the phone about COVID-19. It is operated 24 hours a day in 19 different languages.

There is absolutely no consultation fee and no telephone charges as well. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to call us. Phone number: 0120-992-860

Languages available: English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Portuguese, Spanish, Korean and North Korean, Nepali, Thai, Indonesian, Khmer, Malay, Mongolian, Russian, French, German, Italian, Sinhala

\*You can also receive phone consultation through the LINE app. Here is the QR code for the LINE account.



### Multilingual information on the revitalization effort : "Fukushima Restoration Station"

Get the latest data in 10 different languages regarding food safety efforts and activities of people supporting Fukushima.

<http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/portal/>

### Available in 11 languages

- Help Desk for Foreign Residents -  
Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean,  
Tagalog, Portuguese, Vietnamese,  
Thai, Nepali, Indonesian, Spanish

Every Tuesday to Saturday  
From 9:00 am to 5:15 pm

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### ◇Announcement◇

With the help of everyone, 'Fukushima NOW' has issued the final volume. Thank you for your continuous support up until now.

